

Just Promoted to Internet Manager? What to do first!

Congratulations to the new group of Internet Managers out there! You are embarking on an exciting adventure that will allow you to increase your income by serving the fastest growing segment of the automotive marketplace. For most of you the situation you inherited is not in the best condition unless you are following someone who has been promoted to a different position within your current dealership. Hopefully you are excited about the opportunity and have a lot of energy to bring to the role. Regardless of what situation you walked into there are some important first steps you should take to ensure you have solid success now and in the future. Take these 5 steps first and you will set the stage for good results.

1. Identify Expectations

Of course you have your own expectations and would likely not have accepted the job if you did not feel you could improve your income and position within the dealership. However, it is equally important to find out what your management team expects from the department. Ask them how they will measure the department results and be sure to obtain objective goals that you feel you can reach. It is important that you understand what actions are necessary to achieve the goals and how management will work with you to support your efforts.

2. Identify Resources

Tools – Today’s progressive Internet department’s should have the following tools in place to effectively manage leads and allow your Internet sales team the flexibility to work with customers both in and away from their office.

- **PC** – Every person working with Internet leads should individual access to a computer so they can actively manage leads.
- **Lead Management Tool** – An effective lead management tool keeps you organized and allows you to manage large volumes of leads and market to your customer’s long term.
- **Cell Phone** – In order to fully service the Internet customer you will need a cell phone so customers can contact you when you are away from your desk.
- **Two Way Pager** – An email pager allows you to respond anyplace anytime which will likely exceed your customer’s expectations and position your dealership to sell the customer first.

Leads – There are many sources of leads and your dealership likely has leads coming in from a variety of sources already. Keep in mind that you will receive “leads” by email and by phone depending on your listings. Both types are vital to your operation and it is important that your team be the recipient of the emails **and** the calls related to the Internet. Your lead management tool will be the best source for identifying your lead sources. A good rule of thumb is to generate 80-100 leads for each full-time Internet salesperson if they work the deals from lead inception to vehicle delivery and to generate 150-200 leads for full-time BDC/CRC or call center team member if they set appointments for the dealership sales team.

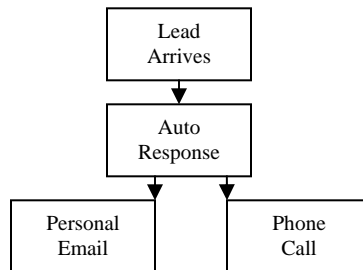
- **Dealership Website Leads** – www.yourdealership.com
- **Manufacturer Leads** – FordDirect.com, BuyaToyota.com, GMBuyPower.com, etc.
- **Third Party Leads** – Dealix.com, AutoUSA.com, Autobytel.com, etc.
- **Online Classified Leads** – AutoTrader.com, Cars.com, AutoExtra.com, etc.
- **Online Auctions** – eBay.com, Overstock.com, etc.

3. Outline a Lead Handling Process

There are a lot of different patterns for managing leads and fortunately most of them work if you implement them consistently. I recommend drawing a simple process diagram on a sheet of paper that identifies the steps to take and who should take them to complete the action within your department when a new lead arrives.

Draw Your Lead Handling Process

A Simple Diagram will clarify for your team the lead handling process and what action each team member will take. *Be specific and carry it out to the fullest detail possible.*



4. Learn Your Products

Internet customers have easy access to information about their choice of vehicles and they typically know a great deal about their choices. As a result, they tend to judge the dealership person they communicate with on a more critical basis if they cannot effectively answer questions about their products. To meet Internet customer's expectations it is important that you ensure that each person on your team is fully committed to learning about the products you represent. Some BDC/CRC or call center experts may take issue with this recommendation but after twenty years of in-dealership sales experience I have found it is better to know the product and be able to respond intelligently than to not know it and try to pretend or avoid product questions by using scripts.

New Inventory – Have your team become product certified by the manufacturer and brush up their skills with product presentations by the dealership sales team. I recommend test driving the products so you can learn about their unique features and benefits.

Used Inventory – Do a daily inventory walk, test drive new arrivals and ask the salesperson that traded for the vehicle to tell you about the history so you can bring the vehicle to life for the customer.

5. Walk in Your Customer's Shoes

In order to understand what your customer expects from your Internet department it is important that each Internet team member visit the sites where your customer submits leads. This will allow them to experience first hand what messages your customer receives while on the site and after they submit the leads. This will be an eye opening experience and will tell you a great deal of how customers are influenced by the lead submission path they take. You will also understand why customers are a little surprised when a dealership emails or calls them after they submit a lead.

There is plenty more to learn but taking these first 5 steps will give you a head start and allow you to generate sales this week!

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